

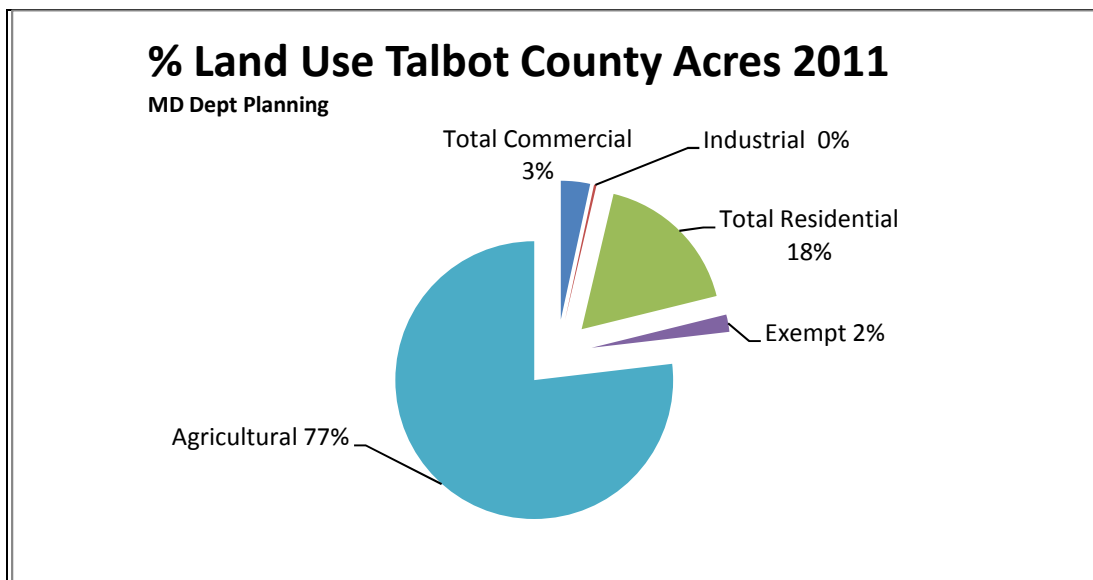
Talbot County Industrial Land Use Recommendation

Submitted to the Talbot County Economic Development Commission
By the Land Use Subcommittee
August 08, 2011

Talbot County requires a long term enhancement to its tax base if it is to preserve the current level of services to its citizens. At the same time, the County needs to attract the type of businesses that will provide challenging, well paying jobs that will retain our young people in the County after they have completed their education. Retail sale and food services will not provide the level of tax revenues nor the professional and artisan positions needed for long term growth and stability. There are tangible limits to the demand for legal, medical, professional and technical service jobs that our population can absorb. The most fruitful employment area for expansion to the tax base can be found in industrial and manufacturing jobs.

However, the immediate challenge in attracting industrial businesses to the County is the lack of Industrial zoned land and infrastructure to accommodate those businesses and the long term planning required to achieve manufacturing and technology based businesses. Maryland Legislative Services reports that the county average for commercial tax revenues, as a percent of total tax revenues is 19% while Talbot County is at 10%. The county is missing a portion of revenues from commercial and industrial activity.

A major obstacle for Talbot County Realtors is the dearth of commercial zoned properties available for sale. The 2011 data for land use in Talbot County, provided by the Maryland Department of Planning, highlights our deficit in the amount of industrial and commercial land use set aside as potential tax revenue generation for the future.



LAND USE IN TALBOT COUNTY

The industrial use of land in Talbot County has traditionally been based in the agricultural activities of farming, harvesting seafood and food production. In 2009 agriculture use made up 60% (109,200 acres) of the approximately 170,000 acres available for development in the 279 square area jurisdiction of Talbot County. The 2011 estimates, released by the Maryland Department of Planning records 77% in agriculture use or 128,536.87 acres. Commercial land use (Commercial, Commercial Condominium, Commercial Residential and Commercial Exempt) recorded 5,654.10 acres. Industrial land use recorded 461.52 acres in 2011; a decline from the 2009 estimates of 496 acres in industrial use.

Industrial zoned land is under increasing pressure for conversion to other types of development, typically commercial service uses, big box commercial, residential and institutional uses, including schools. Industrial zoned property supports high tech office complexes and the demand for dense capacity infrastructure. If we are not mindful of the management of land use, over time we lose the ability to sustain future economic growth. There are limitations to industrial growth in Talbot County and to the future capacity to generate wealth.

Industrial land development requires major long term investments in utility and transportation infrastructure before tax returns are realized. The more industry focused the business base becomes, the higher the demand for complex facility requirements and a technically skilled workforce. This activity results in increasingly innovative products and services and in a greater contribution to the tax base.

Today, industrial land use in Talbot County is defined by manufacturing and technology based businesses in seven established business parks in Easton and Talbot County. Industrial production is the process of using energy to convert raw materials to finished products. Talbot County Planning and Zoning Code (page 34 of 35) illustrates Industrial Uses as the following: Private Airports, Landing Strips and Heliports; Compounding Industries; Flammable Liquid Storage; Food Packaging and Processing; Laboratories for Experiment and Scientific Research; Manufacturing Operations; Mineral Extraction; Product Recycling; Sawmills; Scrap Metal Processing; Trucking and Freight Stations. Agricultural Production is defined separately.

2011 INDUSTRIAL LAND USE ACERAGE IN BUSINSS PARKS

Clifton Industrial Park	30 acres
Airport Industrial Park	126 acres
Easton Business Center	30 acres
Glebe Park	31 acres
Carlton Business Park	57 acres
Easton Technology Center	162 acres
Talbot Commerce Park	<u>111 acres</u>
	547 acres *

*(denotes the total acreage zoned for Industrial Use)

EXISTING LIMITS TO GROWTH

The Land Use Subcommittee identified the following limits to industrial growth development in Talbot County:

- Lack of consideration for acquisition of land immediately accessible to water, rail and regional highways for continued industrial growth
- Absence of a long term economic strategic plan to secure an environment for industrial innovation to support the future tax base of the county. Once a strategic plan is defined, an allocation of resource is necessary to stimulate and promote the development of industrial infrastructure
- Broadly imposed Impact Fees levied against properties with little or no impact on county and town services discourage business development
- Reluctance for the County to exercise its bonding authority to invest in industrial infrastructure.
- State tax policies do not favor business and innovation development.

FUTURE INDUSTRIAL LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Land Use Subcommittee identified the following parcels and ranked them as priorities for future industrial zoned use:

1. Easton and immediate area:
Gannon Farm – but note limitations (structure height, highway access, etc)
Clifton Industrial Park
Airport – 14 acres adjacent to Mistletoe Hall
Mistletoe Hall property – 86.35 acres currently zoned agriculture
Old Ribbon Factory on St. Michael's Road
Nixon Drive – Black Dog Alley properties
2. Town of Trappe:
Back town Road, West from Rte 50 – 50 acres
Lovers Lane – 17 acre parcel with proximity to water and sewer
3. Town of St. Michaels:
Old Flour Mill
4. Town of Oxford:
Spring property behind Wastewater Treatment Facility
Cooperative Oxford Lab

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FRAMEWORK

The Land Use Subcommittee envisions the following recommendations as a framework to provide the County with direction for selecting and reserving land for future industrial use to ensure investment in infrastructure, innovation and sector employment for economic stability. In interviewing the Towns and the County Planning Officers, the Land Use Subcommittee recognized their efforts to coordinate and enforce the exiting Comprehensive Plans and Zoning Code as approved by governance.

The Land Use Subcommittee supports their efforts and promotes continued dialogue to ensure an efficient use of resources to support the County tax base.

- Inventory existing industrial land and identify future parcels to be set aside for industrial development
- Mitigate land taken out of industrial use with suitable parcels of equal or greater size.
- Write zoning code for industrial use matched with industrial classifications that promote innovation and job creation and support the Towns to adopt these restrictions in their codes. Include High Tech Density in the permitted uses for Industrial parcels.
- Identify federal and state funding programs for industrial infrastructure development.
- Encourage flexibility in the planning process to adapt and expand industrial infrastructure for long term use and future demands for high paying wages and property values.
- Invite Towns to plan gateways and manage transportation corridors that accommodate vehicle traffic, pedestrians, access to industrial parks and commercial/retail access: Enable St. Michaels to better control the development of their southern gateway entrance; Engage Easton in planning to integrate a development transition for the north entrance to town from U.S. Route 404 South.

The Economic Development Commission welcomes the opportunity to support the County Council and the Towns as they address a long term strategic plan for industrial development growth that is sustainable, adequately resourced and in keeping with existing land use and environmental regulations.

APPENDIX

The Talbot County Economic Development Commission Land Use Subcommittee was created in March 2011 to study the existing and future industrial land use and propose recommendations to the ED Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission and County Council based on their findings. The purpose of the Land Use Subcommittee was to identify and inventory existing and potential property suitable for future industrial/commercial development in Talbot County and submit as recommendation to the ED Commission.

Paul Makosky, Chairman; Walter E. Chase, Vice Chairman, ED Commission and Trappe Commissioner; Ted Bautz, ED Commission Member; Thomas F. Norton, Airport Board and Fleetwings Incorporated CEO; William N. Kirby; Barry Gillman; and Len Wendowski, ED Commission and Easton Councilman. Additional participation included: Michael Brady, ED Commission and St. Michaels Commissioner; Deborah Renshaw, Town Planner for St. Michael's; Jennifer Shull, Town Planner for Trappe; Brynja Booth, Attorney, Cowdrey and Thompson for Town of Oxford; Martin Sokolich, Talbot County Long Term Planner; Lynn Thomas, Town Planner for Easton; Mike Henry, ED Commission, Airport Manager, Easton Airport; and Mark Cohoon, Talbot County GIS.

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